

058 - Praying and Singing Hymns to God - Acts 16:16-25 2012-02-17

Call to Worship: Psalm 55:16-17

Scripture Reading: Daniel 6:1-10

Sermon: "Praying and Singing Hymns to God" Acts 16:16-25

Benediction: Philippians 4:6-7

INTRODUCTION

Review events leading to Lydia's conversion in Philippi

Paul and the other Christians started out going to prayer. On the way, our enemy attacked them. He was allowed to harm their bodies, but he could not stop them from praying and singing praises to God.

Read the text: Acts 16:16-25

I. Paul and his friends started out going to prayer (16)

A. we saw that Paul's group first met Lydia and preached the good news to her at a place where worshipers of God met to pray on the Sabbath day.

B. I suppose they were on their way to this place.

C. It might have been some other place, because this Greek word used here for "prayer" is also used to describe other religious meeting places, as if Paul might have been going to a public religious gathering to preach; that doesn't make sense to me, but it does to good men, so I want to mention it as a possibility

D. we see this other times

1. Daniel, of course, as we read earlier in Daniel chapter 6

2. see Acts 3:1 Peter and John go up to the temple at the hour of prayer

II. Satan opposed them

Note that we see this in Daniel, chapter 6, and Peter and John Acts 3-4

-praying or going to prayer

-arrested by corrupt government authorities

A. First by mockery or trickery

1. slave girl possessed by a demon, by which she sinned heinously against God

2. wicked men controlled her to their profit

3. by the demon controlling her, she said something about Paul and his friends

(18) Why would a demon have her say this?

a. it was demonic, so not sincere or worshipful

b. it seems to associate these men and the name of Christ with the fortune-telling woman and the pagan deity she supposedly spoke from

c. or was it that she was mocking them?

d. let us just say this, that the devil was opposing the Christians by words

spoken by another person under his influence

B. Second by false accusation---sized and dragged before the authorities

1. their true reason was that Paul's powerful words in the name of Jesus Christ had hurt their wicked business (19)
2. they appealed to other reasons (20-21)
 - a. they are Jews
 - b. they are disturbing the peace
 - c. they are teaching religious ideas that it is unlawful for Romans to receive or observe
 - i. as if religious truth is somehow governed by law
3. the crowd or mob turned against them

C. Third by physical abuse by the government

1. remember learning together that corrupt government officials always are doing a balancing act (true not only in government, but any position of power, such as church leadership)
 - a. they must keep themselves acceptable to the people below them
 - b. they must keep themselves acceptable to the powerful above them
2. here the magistrates see that the people want Paul and Silas to be abused, so they abuse them
 1. strip
 2. beat
 3. imprison
3. actual physical persecution most often comes from the state, not private individuals, since the government bears the sword

D. Our ancient adversary, the devil, would stop you going to prayer

1. he would stop you going to private prayer
2. he would stop you going to family prayer
3. he would stop you going to corporate prayer
4. APPLICATION: Let us be ready for this!
 - a. watch and pray
 - b. use the shield of faith

III. All the devil's opposition did not stop Paul and Silas (25)

A. praying

Henry notes that this was not at a time nor in a place designated for regular prayers, yet prayer was made!

prayer and thanksgiving are done together, but thanksgiving is not the same thing as prayer Philippians 4:6; Colossians 4:2

B. singing hymns to God

1. literally "hymning"
2. the meaning of the Greek word is to sing songs of praise, as to a hero or the

false gods, or, of course, to the One True God

C. the other prisoners were listening

1. what if Paul and Silas had been grumbling, complaining, or vowing revenge?

2. in a little while there will be an earthquake, and the prisoners do not leave, but stay with Paul and Silas!

D. APPLICATION: Let us be similarly undeterred in going to prayer and singing praises to God, no matter what tricks the devil would like to use on us

Paul and the other Christians started out going to prayer. On the way, our enemy attacked them. He was allowed to harm their bodies, but he could not stop them from praying and singing praises to God.